PORTICO

THE IDES OF JUNE.

A POEM,

TO THE FAIR SEX.

——*Latet anguis in herbâ.* VIRG. BUC.

LONDON:

Printed for J. WILKIE, No. 71. St. Paul's Church-Yard.

M DCC LXXIV.

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THE IDES OF JUNE.

SCARCE hath MAY parted with the veſtal hours,
And left her ſiſter all her fields and bowers,
But ſee anon the roſeate JUNE appear,
The ſweeteſt daughter of the fertile year!
Soft as ſhe moves the ſtricken Zephyr blows,
And Loves unnumber'd on her breaſt repoſe;
Around her waiſt the circling Pleaſures twine,
While in her melting eyes the rays of evening ſhine:
To meet her, Ode and Elegy advance,
Light-temper'd Frolick, and diſportful Dance:
Looſe in attire ſhe artleſs treads along,
Nor ſeems to heed the hailings of the throng.

Thus on the ſilver CYDNUS, ÆGYPT's queen,
With all her hand-maids, in full pride was ſeen,
Like ſea-born VENUS and her NEREID train:
She ſeem'd unconſcious of the gen'ral gaze,
She ſeem'd regardleſs of the deaf'ning praiſe.
Sly harlot! She thus, thus defenceleſs, fires
All hearts with the wild rage of uncontroll'd deſires,

But liſt, ye Fair; to You thoſe ſtrains belong:
Ah! liſt a votive poet's honeſt ſong;
So may ye all a future JUNE receive,
The lay a more inſtructive Muſe may give.

In this ſoft month, when ſolar heats conſpire,
To warm the pulſes with unuſual fire,
The maudlin blood with madd'ning impulſe flows,
Nor gives the ſenſes even a ſhort repoſe;

Hence

PORTICO.

Hence, they inform us, appetites ariſe,
While Doubt explores things with her hundred eyes;
Scandal, that lives on ſhredded Infamy,
Now ſips all-knowingly her goſſiptea;
Old Maids, on wither'd Purity elate,
Now leer the Young and Airy to their fate;
While Prudes, their thaw-relenting hearts to ſcreen,
Sackcloth and aſhes all alone are ſeen.

But ſtrange! tho' true it is, in nine ſhort moons
Are heard deep wailings, and obſtetric groans:
Salt tears of wild deſpair o'erflow the eyes,
And from the boſom burſt repentant ſighs:
Forth ſprings to light a child!—The wretched dame
At her own offspring ſtarts, and would diſown her ſhame!
Now at a ſpace th' unconſcious babe ſhe lays,
Now preſſes to her heart, now turns a thouſand ways.

Unhappy

Unhappy boy! no ſign attends thy birth
Of joyous revel, or conſentive mirth:
Tears, ſighs, and imprecating vows, declare
Alone thy portion of the vital air.
Born in dead ſilence, friendleſs and unknown,
On the ſtrange world a naked ſtripling thrown,
Whom thy own native fleſh can heſitate to own.
But where, loſt maid, thy dreams of pleaſure fled?
Where the gay thoughts thy am'rous hours led?
And are Love's laſting fires already dead?
Where the fond maſter of thy ſilly heart?
And has ſoft Love thus prov'd a traitor's part?

Ah! learn, ye Fair, thoſe dang'rous rocks to ſhun,
Where thoughtleſs virgins ſplit, and are undone.
Should the ſly Syrens tempt you to their coaſt,
Your minds are ſhipwreck'd, and your hopes are loſt:

While

While Love, that once ſeem'd made but to obey,
The largeſt proff'rer will the firſt betray.

Wiſh, ye Fair, with a large ardour fir'd,
For ever to control, for ever be admir'd.
Would ye Love's ſceptre undiſputed ſway,
And drive each rebel thought of our's away?
Learn to be grave, with unaffected eaſe;
Reſerv'd to trifle, unconſtrain'd to pleaſe.
Learn, that from VIRTUE all your triumphs flow;
To her your magic charms, your pow'r o'er man, you owe.

This month, ah! dare not Love's fond tales to hear,
Tho' ſweet the flatt'ry to a damſel's ear:
This month, ah! dare not meet a lover's eye,
Tho' in the ſweeteſt metaphor he die:
Ah! dare not now the flow'ry fields pervade,
Trace the meand'ring ſtream, or pierce the woodland ſhade.

In Love's warm tales the foes of honour lie,
And ſpeaking miſchiefs point a lover's eye:
Low in the flowers ſpeckled ſerpents hide,
And vexful inſects ſwarm the river's ſide:
Theſe artful tempt to the protecting ſhade,
Where Paſſion's foils betray, and honours crack'd are laid.

In this warm month (if Bards may be believ'd)
Diana firſt the ſhafts of Love receiv'd.
This goddeſs-prude abhorr'd the ſight of man,
And wild in woods a ſavage huntreſs ran:
On high OLYMPUS no toilette had ſhe
Like any other female deity:
If JOVE gave balls, ſhe never danc'd in fear
MARS ſhould approach her with a ſoldier's leer;
(For, like our BRITISH captains, oft he ſwore
He'd make each lady he congee'd a whore;

Like

Like them he affected to talk big and rule,
Tho' a vile coward, and an arrant fool.)
Some hair-brain'd laſſes follow'd in her train,
Proud, pert and peeviſh, unpolite and vain.
If, as ſhe ſcour'd through the brambled wood,
An harmleſs axman in her paſſage ſtood;
Strait the poor peaſant would ſhe wantonly
Change to a rugged rock or knotty tree:
But ſhould ſome hunter, from the noontide heat,
To the cool margin of ſome ſpring retreat,
And, thoughtleſs, catch her waſh her duſty feet;
Incens'd ſhe'd view him with her cheeks all red,
And plant long antlers on his branching head.

But CUPID, now reſolv'd to make her prove
The magic force of all-ſubduing Love,
To young ENDYMION ev'ry grace he gave,
To wake the ſenſes, or the heart enſlave.

Like

Like a young god the beauteous youth aroſe;
In all his heavenly frame a wond'rous ſweetneſs glows.
'Twas when the goddeſs held the lamp of night,
And o'er the ſea and land ſhed forth her modeſt light:
On LATMOS' rock ſhe ſaw him proſtrate lie,
With his fair viſage upward to the ſky.
Long had ſhe view'd him with a ſtrange delight;
But now he ſeem'd too charming in her ſight.
In his looſe locks the am'rous breezes play'd,
While on his face Night hung a lovely ſhade.
All-fair, all-bright he lay---The goddeſs now
No longer could withſtand, but felt the weighty blow.
Cautious the wide horizon ſhe ſurveys,
But no one murmur hears, no ſingle object ſees.
Dead Silence ſpreads her univerſal reign
O'er th' inactive land and tranquil main.
Strait on a radiant moon-beam ſhe deſcends,
And on the happy rock all-wiſtful ſtands:

A thouſand

A thouſand ways ſhe views the lovely boy;
Now burſts in plaintive rage, now melts in ſoothing joy:
His hands ſhe kiſs'd, then ſtarts! leſt he awake,
And ſtands at diſtance, for her honour's ſake.
She now returns, and now retires; now throws
Herſelf beſide him: broke is his repoſe.

What follow'd, the chaſte Muſes never ſaid;
But all agree ſhe loſt her ——.

See now noos'd ropes and muddy ponds appear,
To crown this hapleſs daughter of the year.
On the green willow, in a ſhape to throw
Herſelf extended on the lake below,
See the poor ruin'd TERAMINTA ſtand,
A broken ring and love-knot in her hand.
She talks Love's wrongs ſo loud, ſo loud her pray'r,
That ſhepherds in th' adjoining meadow hear.

Ah! luckleſs fate! the injur'd damſel cries,
And muſt I drown myſelf before their eyes!
Sure Love demands more ſolemn ſacrifice.
The diſappointed maid withdraws, to wait
Another hour to confirm her fate.
But oh! ye gods, that bleſs the natal hour,
Are there no means to keep a maid ſecure?
Are there no means for reputations laid?
And muſt JUNE always have a maidenhead?
Nature turns pimp; ſhe makes the plain and grove
Act all-conſentive to the God of Love.
Sweet is this moſs to lean a weary head;
Thoſe flowers were ſure intended for a bed.
Purl on, ye ſtreams; ye ſun-burnt poplars weep;
And, ye ſoft birds, ah! chaunt me to my ſleep:
Deſcend ye hailſtones with rapidity;
And, ye loud thunders, ſcare the frighted ſky:

Blow

Blow keen, ye winds, and ſend the damſel home,
Ere her deſigning ſwain with ſmile-betraying come.
Too hapleſs ſex, peculiar in the name
Of blameleſs honour, or of blemiſh'd ſhame;
Born life to cheriſh through it's ſhort-liv'd day,
And man's chief pleaſure, tho' his chiefeſt prey:
Of grace ſubduing, yet of tender frame;
To weak to parry or reſiſt a flame.
See man in ſmiles capriciouſly purſue;
But know, his purpoſe is but to undo:
His wiſh compleat, no longer he remains,
But for freſh conqueſts ſcours the heedleſs plains.
On the ſwift ſtream thus plays the barbed fly,
And cheats the ſpeckled trout's unwary eye:
On the gloſs'd prize a hopeful leap he gives,
And in his ſcarlet breaſt the pointed hook receives:
Now trac'd no longer—by the hairy wile,
He lies 'midſt other fiſh, an unregarded ſpoil.

This

This month, indulgence neither give nor uſe,
But ſhew you have a power to refuſe.
What tho' ſoft Love repeatedly advance,
And urge to the cool walk, or the diſportful dance;
As oft reſolve unſhaken to deny,
And Love will bluſh at his own liberty.
This month be not one buſy thought at reſt,
For Love but neſtles in an empty breaſt;
Or in the loom, or other charge employ'd,
Your time in juſt proportions ſtill divide:
Let Love ne'er ſee you, liſtleſs, gape away
One idle moment of the tedious day,
But at each viſit find ſome noiſy care,
Perplex his tongue, and deafen all his prayer:
The God in pet will then his ſuit decline,
Nor you the following JUNE, with aches repentant, pine.
More wou'd I ſay, but JUNE too haſty treads
And threats, each ſtep, unguarded maidenheads.

Better

Better with half a noſtrum ſit than none;
So, my good girls, beware the Ides of JUNE.
But ſhould my Muſe ſucceed where prieſts and aunts
Fail in ſpleen-lectures, and in ſermon-rants;
Oh! ſhould my idle ſong but chance avail,
Where bare example is confeſs'd to fail,
Each dang'rous JUNE, all-zealous, would I bring
A moral draught from AGANIPPE's ſpring;
Tho' midwives curs'd me, juſtices aſſail'd,
The nurſe reproach'd me, or the captain rail'd;
To pay the Muſe (ah! take it not amiſs)
I aſk the yearly tribute of a kiſs.

FINIS.

THE IDES OF JUNE.

Better with half a nofrum fit than none;
So, my good girls, beware the Ides of JUNE.
But fhould my Mafe fucceed where pitafs and rums
Fail in fpleen-leduces, and in fermon-rums;
Oh! fhould my idle long but chance avail,
Where bare example is confeft'd to fail,
Each dang'rous JUNE, all-zealous, would I bring
A moral draught from AGAMEMNA's fpring;
Tho' midwives curs'd me, juftices affail'd,
The nurfe reproach'd me, or the captain rail'd,
To pay the Mafe (ah! take it not amifs)
I afk the yearly tribute of a kifs.

FINIS.